

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Fionnladh Dubh agus na Ceatharnaich

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,219. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 915 corresponds to Litir 1,219. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Fada air ais, ann an Litir fichead 's a h-ochd (28), rinn mi aithris air Fionnladh Dubh MacRath. Bha e car ainmeil ri a linn fhèin. Bha e na gheamair o chionn ceudan bhliadhnaichean anns an sgìre eadar Cinn t-Sàile, Cill Fhaolain, Gleann Afraig agus Gleann Canaich.

An-diugh, tha mi airson sgeul eile innse dhuibh mun dearbh dhuine – Fionnladh Dubh nam Fiadh, mar a chanadh daoine ris. Chan e a-mhàin geamair a bh' ann. Bha e cuideachd na thuathanach. Bha e fhèin agus a bhean a' fuireach ann an àite ris an canar Coille Rìgh ann an Gleann Eilcheig ann an Cinn t-Sàile.

Feasgar a bha seo, chaidh Fionnladh a-mach a choimhead air a chrodh. Bha feadhainn dhiubh air a dhol a dhìth. Bha fios aig Fionnladh cò a bu choireach – ceatharnaich à Loch Abar a bhiodh a' togail creach.

Chaidh Fionnladh às an dèidh. Ràinig e air an oidhche iad. Bha na ceatharnaich uile nan cadal. Mharbh Fionnladh iad. Dh'fhalbh e dhachaigh le a chrodh. Bha e an dòchas nach fhulaingeadh e creach mar sin a-rithist **fhad 's a bu bheò e**.

Chaidh na seachdainean seachad 's na seachdainean seachad, agus bha cùisean a' dol gu math do Fhionnladh. Ach latha a bha seo, **bha e a' saodachadh a chruidh don aonach**. 'S e sin a chanas muinntir na sgìre sin ris a' mhonadh far am bi crodh ag ionaltradh – an t-aonach.

Dh'fhàs e sgìth agus ghabh e fois airson greis. Chunnaic e triùir fhear a' teàrnadh a-bhàn leis an aonach. Bha iad a' tighinn ga ionnsaigh agus bha fios taghta aige nach buineadh iad don àite. Bha amharas aige gur e luchd-tòir a bh' annta is gun robh iad a' dol a thoirt tòrachd a-mach. Shuidh e far an robh e.

Thàinig iad thuige. Thuirt fear dhiubh ris, 'Coigreach a th' annad san àite seo?'

'O, chan e,' fhreagair Fionnladh. 'Bidh mi gu tric anns an àite seo.'

'A bheil thu eòlach air fear ris an can iad "Fionnladh Dubh nam Fiadh"?' thuirt a' chiad fhear.

'O tha,' dhearbh Fionnladh. 'Tha mi na mo bhuachaille aige.'

Cha robh a dhìth air na spùinneadairean ach sin. Dh'iarr iad air Fionnladh an toirt gu dachaigh a mhaighstir. 'Uill, gabhaibh mo leisgeul,' arsa Fionnladh, 'ach tha mi rudeigin ciorramach agus tha mi slaodach air mo chasan.'

‘Hut,’ arsa fear de na coigrich, ‘cobhairidh sinne thu.’ Rinn iad cobhair air agus mu dheireadh ràinig iad taigh Fhionnlaidh. Chomharraich Fionnladh an taigh. Bha a bhean aig an doras. Feumaidh gun do rinn Fionnladh comharra air choreigin dhi. Thuig i gun robh na coigrich ann airson an duine aice a mharbhadh.

‘Nach tig sibh a-steach,’ thuirt i riutha. ‘Gheibh sibh biadh.’

‘Tha sinn coma mu bhiadh, tha sinn a’ coimhead airson fear an taighe,’ thuirt fear dhen triùir. ‘A bheil e a-staigh?’

‘Tha e a-staigh,’ fhreagair ise, ‘ach chan eil e a’ cumail gu math. Cha do dh’èirich e fhathast.’ Bha i a’ cur biadh air a’ bhòrd airson aire nan daoine a chumail. Nuair nach robh iad a’ coimhead oirre, chuir i bogha is saigheadan a-mach air an uinneig. Bha Fionnladh a’ feitheamh air an taobh a-muigh.

Chaidh Fionnladh don doras leis a’ bhogha is saigheadan agus mharbh e an triùir am broinn an taighe. Agus sin mo stòiridh mu Fhionnladh Dubh nam Fiadh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Fionnladh Dubh MacRath: *Black Finlay MacRae*;

spùinneadairean: *raiders*; ciorramach: *disabled*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ri a linn fhèin: *in his own day*; bha e na gheamair: *he was a gamekeeper*; eadar Cinn t-Sàile, Cill Fhaolain, Gleann Afraig agus Gleann Canaich: *between Kintail, Killilan, Glen Affric and Glen Cannich*; bha e fhèin agus a bhean a’ fuireach ann an Gleann Eilcheig: *he and his wife were living in Glen Elchaig*; bha feadhainn dhiubh air a dhol a dhìth: *some of them had gone missing*; cò a bu choireach: *who was responsible*; ceatharnaich à Loch Abar a bhiodh a’ togail creach: *caterans from Lochaber who would plunder cattle*; chaidh na seachdainean seachad ’s na seachdainean seachad: *many many weeks went past (this is the idiom the storyteller used)*; ’s e sin a chanas muinntir na sgìre ris a’ mhonadh far am bi crodh ag ionaltradh: *this is what the people of the area call the high country where cattle graze*; chunnaic e triùir fhear a’ teàrnadh a-bhàn leis an aonach: *he saw three men descending from the hill*; bha iad a’ tighinn ga ionnsaigh: *they were coming towards him*; bha fios taghta aige nach buineadh iad don àite: *he well knew that they did not belong to the area*; bha amharas aige gur e luchd-tòir a bh’ annta: *he suspected they were avengers*; gun robh iad a’ dol a thoirt tòrachd a-mach: *that they were going to exact revenge*; thàinig iad thuige: *they came to him*; coigreach a th’ annad san àite seo?: *you’re a stranger in this place?*; tha mi na mo bhuachaille aige: *I’m a cowherd for him*; cobhairidh sinne thu: *we’ll help you*; feumaidh gun do rinn X comharra air choreigin: *X must have made some sign or other*; bha i a’ cur biadh air a’ bhòrd airson aire nan daoine a chumail: *she was putting food on the table to retain the men’s attention*; leis a’ bhogha is saigheadan: *with the bow and arrows*; mharbh e an triùir am broinn an taighe: *he killed the three men inside the house*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bha e a’ saodachadh a chruidh don aonach: *he was driving the cattle to the hill pastures. This story was collected by Calum Iain Maclean from John Finlayson of Drumbuie in Lochalsh. The storyteller actually explains in the story that the local term for hill pasture is ‘aonach’.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: nach fhulaingeadh e creach mar sin a-rithist fhad ’s a bu bheò e: *that he would never suffer a plundering like that again as long as he lived.*

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA